

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 226445

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS:PORG, SA, WA

SUBJECT:NAMIBIA: BOTHA LETTER TO SYG

REF: A) USUN 3464; B) PRETORIA 5242

1. SOUTH AFRICAN CHARGE RETIEF CALLED ON UNDER
SECRETARY NEWSOM SEPTEMBER 6 TO DELIVER COPY OF BOTHA'S
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LETTER TO SYG WALDHEIM EXPRESSING SOUTH AFRICA'S
RESERVATIONS TO SYG'S REPORT TO SECURITY COUNCIL ON
UNTAG. RETIEF NOTED THAT BOTHA WAS LEAVING NEW YORK
TONIGHT AND THAT FOURIE WOULD PROBABLY ACCOMPANY HIM.
IN DESCRIBING SOUTH AFRICA'S POSITION, RETIEF SAID THAT
SAG STAND SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS BREAK IN
NEGOTIATIONS WITH CONTACT GROUP OR WITH SYG. HOWEVER,

SITUATION WAS VERY "FLUID AND CONFUSING, AND WE WANT TO SEE HOW SITUATION WILL DEVELOP AND HOW SECURITY COUNCIL WILL ACT IN ORDER TO DETERMINE OUR OWN POSITION."

2. UNDER SECRETARY SAID THAT WE WOULD OF COURSE STUDY BOTHA LETTER. HE NOTED THAT WE HAD EARLIER RECEIVED REPORT FROM NEW YORK THAT ISSUES RAISED IN LETTER WERE UNDER INTENSIVE DISCUSSION AND THAT THERE WAS GOOD

CHANCE SOLUTION COULD BE FOUND. AS FAR AS QUESTION OF DATE FOR NAMIBIA INDEPENDENCE, THE UNDER SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT TIME REMAINING BETWEEN NOW AND DECEMBER 31 WAS CLEARLY INSUFFICIENT TO IMPLEMENT CONTACT GROUP PROPOSAL AND THAT NO USEFUL PURPOSE WAS SERVED BY ADHERING TO THIS DATE. UNDER SECRETARY ALSO POINTED OUT THAT WHILE PROBLEMS WOULD DOUBTLESS ARISE IN IMPLEMENTING CONTACT GROUP PROPOSAL, WE WERE SO NEAR SUCCESS IN RESOLVING NAMIBIAN PROBLEM THAT IT WOULD BE TRAGIC TO BREAK OFF PROCESS AT THIS LATE HOUR. HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT SOUTH AFRICA WOULD CONTINUE TO PARTICIPATE IN EFFORT TO RESOLVE NAMIBIAN ISSUE.

3. IN RESPONSE, RETIEF EXPRESSED SAG VIEW THAT CONTACT GROUP PROPOSAL WAS BEING REINTERPRETED IN SYG'S REPORT TO SECURITY COUNCIL. THIS DID NOT INSPIRE CONFIDENCE IN PRETORIA; HE SAID, THAT CONTACT GROUP PROPOSAL WOULD CONFIDENTIAL

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BE FAIRLY IMPLEMENTED. RETIEF ALSO STRESSED POINT THAT SAG COULD NOT DETERMINE WHETHER SWAPO HAD IN FACT ACCEPTED CONTACT GROUP PROPOSAL. UNDER SECRETARY ASKED WHETHER LATEST SAG MOVE INDICATED THAT SAG WAS ABANDONING NEGOTIATIONS UNTIL ITS POINTS OF CONCERN WERE SATISFIED. RETIEF SAID THAT THIS WAS NOT THE CASE. SAG WAS PREPARED TO CONTINUE TALKS WITH CONTACT GROUP AND SYG AND WOULD DETERMINE POSITION AFTER SECURITY COUNCIL ACTED. UNDER SECRETARY EXPRESSED SURPRISE THAT SAG HAD FOUND IT NECESSARY TO TAKE SUCH AN EXTREME ACTION IN VIEW OF FACT THAT ISSUES SEEM NEAR RESOLUTION IN NEW YORK.

4. COMMENT: DEPARTMENT'S INITIAL INTERPRETATION IS THAT BOTHA LETTER AND HIS DECISION TO DEPART FOR PRETORIA ARE PART OF SAG EFFORT TO DRIVE BEST POSSIBLE BARGAIN WITH UN ON PARAMETERS FOR UNTAG OPERATION. SOUTH AFRICAN DOMESTIC POLITICS, AND BOTHA'S PERSONAL AMBITIONS, MAY ALSO PLAY SOME ROLE IN THIS PROCESS. QUESTION NOW IS WHAT FURTHER STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO RIVING SOUTH AFRICANS ABOARD UNTAG MANDATE. ONE POSSIBLE STEP MIGHT BE LETTER FROM WALDHEIM TO BOTHA WHICH

RESPONDS TO AT-LEAST SOME OF OBJECTIONS RAISED IN
LATTER'S LETTER. IN PARTICULAR, WALDHEIM MIGHT BE ABLE
TO ASSURE BOTHA, ON BASIS OF HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH
NUJOMA, THAT SWAPO ACCEPTS CONTACT GROUP PROPOSAL AND
IS, IN FACT, PREPARED TO SIGN CEASEFIRE AGREEMENT.

(THIS ASSUMES, OF COURSE, THAT NUJOMA WOULD BE PREPARED
MAKE SUCH A STATEMENT TO SYG.) POSSIBLE SYG
LETTER MIGHT ALSO MAKE POINT THAT NUMBER OF UN TROOPS
IN NAMIBIA WILL BE DETERMINED ON THE BASIS OF THE
SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY, AND THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF
CEASEFIRE AND ITS STRICT OBSERVANCE BE ALL PARTIES WOULD
OBVIOUSLY HAVE EFFECT OF REDUCING NUMBER OF UN TROOPS
REQUIRED DURING TRANSITION PERIOD. WE WOULD WELCOME
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EMBASSY PRETORIA'S VIEWS AS TO WHETHER LETTER ALONG
THOSE LINES MIGHT SATISFY SOUTH AFRICA'S CONCERNS AND
SUFFICE TO BRING SAG ON BOARD UNTAG MANDATE.

CHRISTOPHER

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